

FCC Testimonial      12/9/04      St. Paul, MN

I'm Beth Van Dam, an employee of the Minneapolis College of Art + Design, an artist, a music and culture enthusiast, and collaborator with Radio MCAD, currently available for public consumption at <http://radio.mcad.edu>. Our goal is to obtain an LPFM license.

Today I express my disenchantment with the ways the media, and the legal channels that exist to utilize it, fail to meet the fair standards a democracy calls for.

In representing Radio MCAD, I want to make clear how frustrating it is to consider legal use of the radio waves as a potential means or opportunity for consolidating and strengthening our college community. Radio is clearly an effective medium for communication to a community, yet Low Power FM licensing restrictions remain about as difficult as they could possibly be. Until the day the FCC and the NAB recognize that LPFM does not pose the threat (and here I cite the Mitre report) of interference with big broadcast radio, Long Live the Pirates!, wherever they may be, who forge ahead anyway, fighting the good fight for our "public" airwaves.

Secondly, I am in total opposition to the way corporations like Clear Channel are allowed to operate and continue their domination of local media markets, be they radio waves, billboards, concert venues, or theaters (most currently the Hennepin Theater Trust is a target of their exploits). Artists and performers, who provide the content in all the realms they exploit, are being silenced, locked out of venues and radio programming—for making the choice not to support their monopolization. They should have an equal voice. These creative people are the ones who bring life and spirit to our culture. Under the current system, Clear Channel has veto power over what voices become heard. This is wrong. The public, who technically "own" the airwaves, should be able to decide.

Open up LPFM licensing and witness the inevitable positive change in local communities where a democratic representation of the people can exist!

Mr. Copps and Mr. Adelstein, thank you for your work and for your efforts to hear the diverse voices of the public. I hope the information you gather will help create positive changes in FCC structuring and policymaking.